



BLISS



AN OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA NORTH EAST Rotary International District 3291

Vol. : 40
Club No. : 23802

Thursday, 18th December, 2025
1637th Regular Meeting

No. 12
Charter on: 12.06.1986

We meet every alternate Thursday at THE ANTELOPE, 3, Ho Chi Minh Sarani, Kolkata - 700071 at 8.00 pm.

Rtn Angana Paul
President

Rtn Sabyasachi Roy
Secretary

PP Rtn Chandra Kumar Paul
Treasurer

PP Rtn Subhashis Ghosh
Editor

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RTN SABYASACHI ROY

Journey of self-empowerment leads to Rotary

By Jonathan Black

If this were a movie it would be a Hollywood salute to grit and gratitude, an inspirational biopic in which a determined woman survives life in a homeless shelter and repays the service organization that rescued her. Here is Janelle Hall, mid-2008, in her worn pink shelter robe, jobless after a turn mopping floors at a laundromat, a refugee from an in-law's tiny apartment with her then-husband and four young children.

"Hours from the street" is how Hall describes the day she and her family got admitted to the shelter in Clifton, New Jersey. This was shortly after a Rotary district governor had called on Rotarians to set up a program to help families like hers battered by the Great Recession, and one volunteer, Bonnie Sirower, who was a board member at a nearby YMCA, was told about Hall.

"She was looking for a hand up, not a handout," says Sirower, who was part of a team of Rotary members from District 7490 that spent weeks with Hall and others in need as part of the district program. They provided Christmas presents for her children, a wardrobe for job interviews, a bus pass to get her to those interviews, and then leads to a service organization that offered not only a job but child care for Hall's kids, free. "It was like divine intervention," says Hall.

The daughter of immigrant parents from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, Hall had flunked out of college, overwhelmed with challenges — small children, an emotionally abusive husband, and "bad decisions." So, with this chance for a second chance, the Rotary team helped locate a possible college and paid for her application fee.

"There weren't any computers at the shelter, forget a laptop," remembers Hall. "I wrote my essay with a pencil on purple copy paper. My acceptance letter was mailed to the homeless shelter and I still have it today."

Three years later she graduated from William Paterson University. Soon after getting a job, a coworker said, "C'mon, Janelle, why don't we get ourselves a master's degree!"

In Hall's biopic the pages begin flying off the calendar: a master's degree in public administration from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 2013; a doctorate in public policy and administration in 2020 from Walden University, where another coworker urged they both enroll for a PhD. "Guess who got her degree first?" Hall says with a grin.

Hall is now an adjunct faculty member at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. She has been honored by local and state officials for her contributions to her community. She has written a motivational book titled *The Daughter of Destiny*, which maps her history and offers "8 steps [that] can lead you to personal empowerment."

In her own climactic, destined moment of self-empowerment, Hall became the executive director of the United Passaic Organization, a broad-based service group for the city that helps families in need — and the very organization that once helped pay her rent years ago when she was struggling. Her story, not surprisingly, has compelled attention, especially among Rotary members. Early in 2024, for example, there she was addressing 300 people at a Rotary presidents-elect learning seminar in Whippany, New Jersey.

"Let me introduce myself," she told the audience, whereupon she removed the pink bathrobe she'd pulled on earlier, the very robe she had worn in the homeless shelter, to reveal a striking blue dress and her proud empowerment. "I am a homeowner and college professor. I sit on the Board of Governors at Fairleigh Dickinson. I have my own business called Beyond Inspired. I am the CEO of the very organization that I once received services from."



From homelessness to family turmoil, Janelle Hall faced many challenges. Now she's focused on helping others.

Image credit: Roshni Khatri

Janelle Hall

PhD in public policy and administration, Walden University, 2020

Adjunct faculty, Seton Hall University, 2023-present

CEO, United Passaic Organization, 2021-present

With each accomplishment the room erupted in cheers, almost drowning out her conclusion: “And all the accomplishments I shared with you are thanks to the magic of Rotary.”

“It took her almost an hour to leave the ballroom after her speech,” Sirower reports. “Everybody kept wanting to talk to her. And she made a promise to me at that time that she would start her own Passaic Rotary club to replace the one our district had lost during COVID.”

Within months, Hall had recruited 25 members and soon after, in February 2025, the Rotary Club of Passaic was officially chartered with Hall now serving as its president.

The club has already hosted its first retreat and is planning an international service trip to the Dominican Republic, which won’t be Hall’s first trip out of the country. In 2024 she was part of an organized trip to Ghana that she describes as a “quest for spiritual growth” and part of efforts “to reunite ... Africans and the global diaspora.” The most meaningful part for her turned out to be a visit to an orphanage where Hall distributed 250 schoolbooks donated by a childhood friend and school principal, Tiffany Crockett, who is also a charter member of Hall’s Rotary club.

“You surround yourself with change agents. You want to challenge one another,” Crockett says in describing her longtime relationship with Hall.

Hall’s own journey has had no shortage of challenges. She says her husband did not physically abuse her but chipped away at her sense of self in other ways: verbal abuse, denial of control, restriction of access to friends, and a growing isolation. At age 21, “young [and] inexperienced,” Hall married a man nearly twice her age. “My family essentially disowned me because of the choice I made,” she writes in *The Daughter of Destiny*. She nevertheless kept her father company in the months before his death from leukemia in 2019 and helped her siblings take care of their mother, who had Alzheimer’s, until she died in 2021.

There is much to be thankful for. Her children are grown; three of them are currently in college. Hall herself has “taken back ownership of my name.” “My divorce is final!” she writes in her book. “When the judge banged his gavel, he gave me full custody of my destiny.”

“Your journey in life is how you use your success to help others,” Hall says. “Things may seem dim or dark for a reason. It’s up to you to be a beacon so others can understand that darkness is just temporary.” Roll credits. Close curtain.



Janelle Hall helped charter the Rotary Club of Passaic in February and serves as its president.

Image credit: Roshni Khatri

Family Corner

Congratulations

Miss Sreejoni Roy,

Daughter of PP Rtn Shubadip Roy

awarded First Prize

as a

Team Member of TBS, Hyderabad

at an

Inter College Drama Competition.





RCCNE sponsored a stall for Pratham Padakshep, an NGO, at Urshita Mela, winter exhibition and sale, held at Simla Byayam Samiti Durga Puja Ground



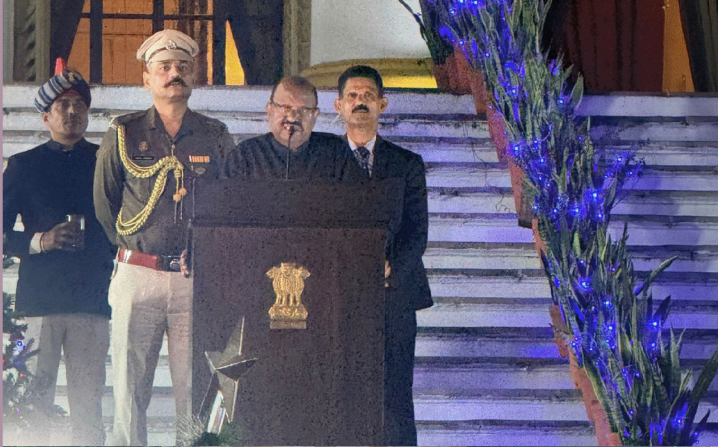
RCCNE was represented by President Rtn Angana Paul at Rendezvous - 2nd President Secretary AG ZS meet held at Rotary Sadan

Project Report: Heritage Walk

A memorable day for the Interact Club of DPS Megacity as their heritage walk, organised by the Rotary Club of Calcutta North East, concluded with a delightful pre-Christmas celebration at Raj Bhavan, Kolkata. What began as an educational visit turned into a rare opportunity to experience the festive spirit in the presence of His Excellency, the Governor of West Bengal, Dr. CV Ananda Bose. The students and faculty were filled with gratitude for this unique and enriching experience beyond the classroom. From RCCNE, Rtn Angana Paul, Rtn Ahana Ghosh, Rtn Puspita Mukherjee and Mr Puspen Mukherjee, brother of Rtn Puspita Mukherjee were present.



President Rtn Angana Paul attended a sports event at Pareshnath Balika Bidyalaya



Members of RCCNE along with President Elect Rtn Sabyasachi Roy, attended Melbandhan, a district meet and greet program for Presidents and district officials for the year 2026-27.

ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA NORTHEAST MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING NO. 1636

Date: 11th December, 2025

Venue : The Antelope, 3, Ho Chi Minh Sarani,
Kolkata - 700017

Call to Order

President Rtn Angana Paul called the meeting to order. The National Anthem was led by PP Rtn Subhashis Kar, with all members joining in respect.

President's Project Reports

President Rtn Angana Paul presented updates on recent Club activities:

22nd November: The Felicitation cum Cultural program organised by Dhakuria Durgoutsav Samity, where RCCNE members were invited and called upon the stage for thanks giving and was felicitated by the club for the water purifier project in 2 schools in Dhakuria in collaboration with Dhakuria Durgoutsav Samity.

26th November 2025 : Cervical Cancer Vaccination Camp at Jyoti Prasad Memorial High School, Pandua. Rtn PP Chandra Kumar Paul, PP Rtn Biswajit Chaudhuri, PP Rtn Ramprasad Chattopadhyay, Secretary, Rtn Sabyasachi Roy, Rtn Swapnamita Roy, and Rtn Rathindra Nath Dey were attendees along with President Rtn Angana Paul. 88 Cervical Cancer Vaccines were administered to 88 Girls Student. Doctors from CNCRI were also attended for Vaccination. School authority extended their full support for this project. Project successfully completed.

27.11.25 : Foundation Seminar, attended by President Angana Paul, PP Rtn Chandra Kumar Paul, PP Rtn Prabir Kumar Paul, Rtn Sabyasachi Roy and Rtn Sukanta Khan, and Rtn Swapnamita Roy. RCCNE member contributed \$2200 for Foundation on that day.

07.12 25 : Our Flagship Project MAA was conducted successfully for 800 beneficiaries. The President congratulated all members on successful completion of our Flagship Project MAA. Total 39 clubs including 3 IWC join in this project and with last 10 years this is the Highest No of participation of Club from the district 3291. Eye Check-up Camp were also conducted for 800 MAA by Shurshurt Eye Hospital, Kolkata. Total beneficiary attended this eye check-up were 210 and out of this 15 patients selected for Cataract Operation and 15 for Spectacle.

Upcoming Projects & Announcements

1. PP Rtn Subhashis Kar gave a proposal for Conducting One Club Meeting at RAJ Bhaban (presently known as LOK BHABAN) as per availability of date. PP Rtn Shubadip Roy suggested that meeting may be with spouse. All members agreed to accept this proposal and President will do the further needful for this meeting.

2. 13.12 2025. 2nd heritage walk at LOK BHAVAN will be held and 40 children and 6 teacher will be attending. President Rtn Angana Paul will also attend this Walk

3. RCCNE already received 50 Blankets from District and PP Rtn Shubhadip Roy will also donate 50 Blankets. These Blankets will be distributed at Nandigram in this month.

4. Winter garments and cakes will be distributed at Calcutta Orphanage on 24th December. Winter garments will be sponsored by PP Rtn Saumendra Mohan Rakshit and Rtn Sabyasachi Roy. Few more items will also be distributed, which will be provided from Club Account.

5. RCCNE will sponsor a stall for Ursita Mela at Simla Byayam Samity Durga Puja Ground for Rs. 5000. The project is in continuity for the last 5 years.

6. President informed that Annual Meeting will be held on 18.12.2025 at Antelope. She request all members to be present in this meeting.

7. Pareshnath Girls School invited President for attending School Sports scheduled for this month.

8. President informs that one Thalassemia Awareness Camp will held at JU Saltlake Campus in January-2026. Rtn Amitava Dutta, Pro VC (JU) has been requested by President to help in conducting this camp.

9. President also informed the present health condition of PP Rtn Sujit Dutt. He is recovering nicely under treatment of Rtn Dr Binayak Chanda.

Secretarial Report/Business

President then called upon the acting Secretary PP Rtn Ramprasad Chattopadhyay for this meeting only, (in absence of Secy Rtn Sabyasachi Roy) to conduct secretarial business. He thanked all members present and confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting. He extended birthday and anniversary wishes to members and their families.

Conclusion.

With no other business to discuss, President Rtn. Angana Paul concluded the meeting.

Sponsorship Acknowledgements

- BLISS: Rtn Salil Kumar Chandra
- Fellowship: PP Rtn Saumendra Mohan Rakshit
- Snacks: Rtn Dr Amitava Dutta

Minutes Prepared by: PP Rtn Ramprasad Chattopadhyay

Birthday Greetings

- 20 Dec : Nandita Khan w/o Rtn Sukanta Khan
- 23 Dec : Debroop, S/o Rtn Chandra and Angana Paul
- 24 Dec : Rtn Dr Supratip Kundu
- 25 Dec : Rtn Kamal Pal
- 28 Dec : Sutirna, D/o Rtn Sudip Kumar Dutta
- 29 Dec : Rtn Angana Paul
- 01 Jan : Bhumika, D/o Rtn Srikanta & Indrani Basu Mallik
- 01 Jan : Rtn Tapas Kumar Adalder
- 02 Jan : Madhuri Chattopadhyay,
W/o Rtn Ram Prasad Chattopadhyay
- 02 Jan : Amrita, D/o Rtn Amitava Datta
- 02 Jan : Rtn Sukanta Khan
- 03 Jan : Rtn Dr Debarati Paul
- 05 Jan : Mahuya Mondal, W/o Rtn Tapas Kumar Adalder
- 07 Jan : Rtn Dr Binayak Chanda